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Fiftieth anniversary of St. Jo



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1869 — 1919

ST. JOHN'S LODGE, No. 435

F. & A. M.

READING, PENNSYLVANIA

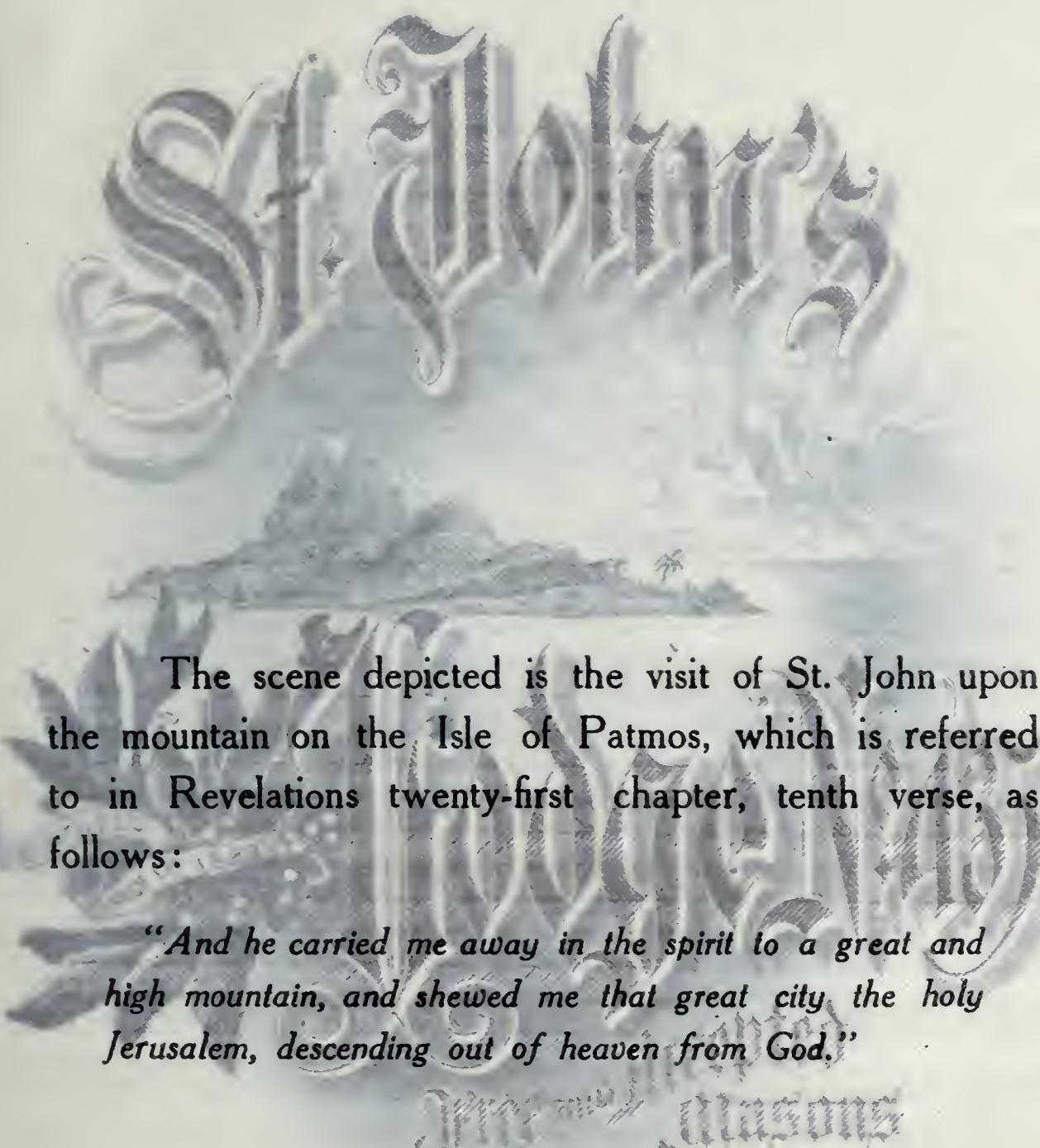
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UNIVERSITY



The scene depicted is the visit of St. John upon the mountain on the Isle of Patmos, which is referred to in Revelations twenty-first chapter, tenth verse, as follows:

“And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God.”

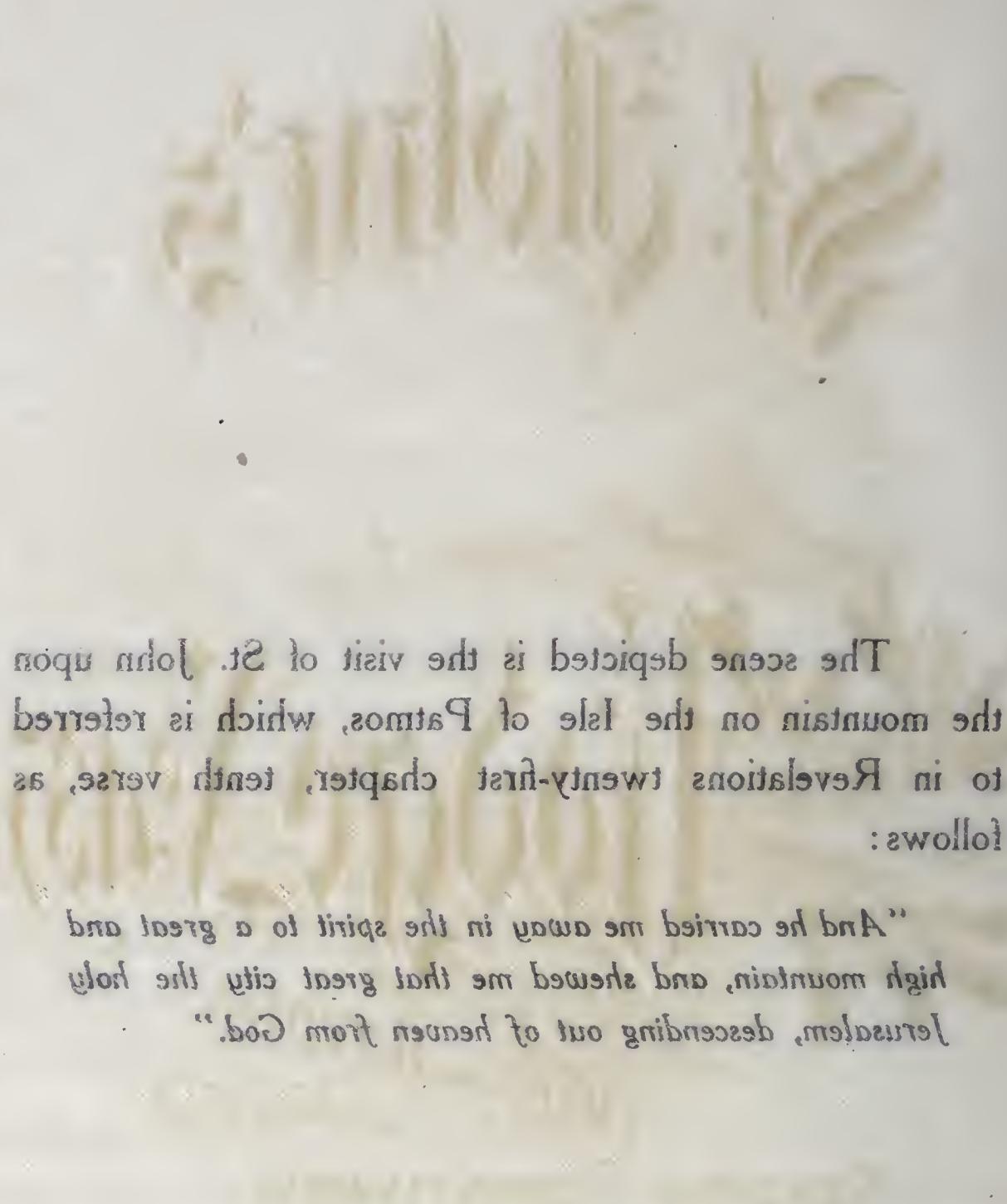
THE FIFTH ANNIVERSARY

READING, PENNSYLVANIA.

FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY.

MARCH 7TH 1919

MASONIC TEMPLE.



The scene depicted is the visit of St. John about the mountain on the left of Patmos, which is referred to in Revelation twenty-first chapter twenty-two, as follows:

"And he carried me in the spirit of a eagle and showed me the great city, the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God."

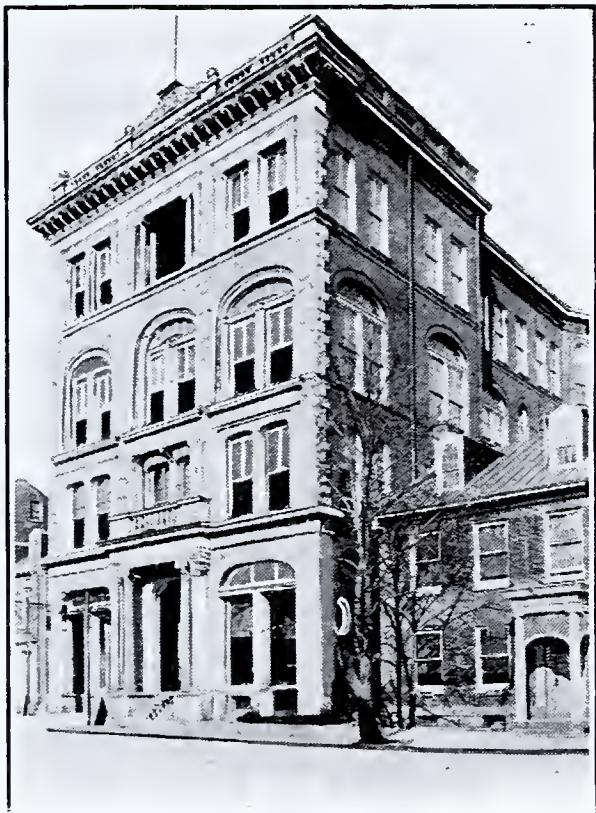


Sixtieth Anniversary,
MARCH 7TH 1919
MASONIC TEMPLE.

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Freemasons. Reading, Pa. St. John's Lodge.



MASONIC TEMPLE, READING, PA.

FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY
of
ST. JOHN'S LODGE, NO. 435

F. & A. M.

READING, PENNSYLVANIA

Masonic Temple, March 7, A.D. 1919—A.L. 5919

CONSTITUTED MARCH 1, A.D. 1869 — A.L. 5869

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PRESS OF
EDWARD PENGELLY & BROTHER
READING, PENNA.

To the Worshipful Master, Officers and Brethren
of St. John's Lodge, No. 435, F. & A. M.

Brethren: Your committee appointed to make the necessary arrangements to commemorate the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Constitution of the Lodge have performed that duty, and take pleasure in presenting this beautiful volume to preserve in permanent form the record of this most auspicious event.

We deeply appreciate the enthusiastic comments of approval by the brethren in passing on the work done. The hearty co-operation of our Worshipful Master, Brother John Arthur Keppelman, and the valuable assistance rendered by our able historian, Past Master Brother Henry M. M. Richards, who performed a like service on the Twenty-fifth Anniversary of the Lodge, in compiling facts connected with St. John's Lodge from its very inception to the present date, has enabled the committee to complete its work with credit to the Lodge.

In the preparation of this historical record of the past fifty years we felt that the same would be incomplete without the photogravures of the Officers, past and present, who have so generously given of their time and talents in the interests of the brethren and St. John's Lodge.

We also include the photogravures of our distinguished guests who honored us by their presence and contributed in no small measure to the success of this memorial occasion.

The committee appreciates the assistance rendered so unselfishly by some of the brethren, and in submitting this valuable record we do so in a fraternal spirit and with a prayer that the Great Architect will continue to bless and prosper our Lodge and its members.

THE COMMITTEE OF ARRANGEMENTS.

JENKIN HILL, *Chairman.*
HENRY M. M. RICHARDS, *Historian.*
OSCAR B. WETHERHOLD,
HENRY M. FEGLEY,
HARRY J. DUMN,
ALEXANDER W. LUCK,
CHRISTIAN H. KENDIG,
DAVID H. KENDIG, JR.

R. W. Grand Master's Approval

THIS HISTORY of St. John's Lodge, No. 435, F. & A. M., Reading, Pa., approved and its publication authorized.

JAMES B. KRAUSE,
Grand Master.

February 28, 1919.



JAMES B. KRAUSE, R.W. GRAND MASTER
1918-1919

Fifty Years of St. John's Lodge

"Decori decus addit avito"



N these pages it is intended to relate some of the trials, successes and events in the life of a noble and honorable child of a great and glorious parent, which has not been unmindful of the source whence it sprang, and whose continuous effort has been to add honor to its ancestral honors, "*Decori decus addit avito.*"

Pennsylvania is the "Cradle of American Freemasonry." In this province the craft was introduced in 1730, if not sooner, and its original Grand Lodge was established June 5, 1730, three years prior to the Massachusetts claim of April 30, 1733. It was practically independent in all respects, thus making it the third oldest Grand Lodge of the world, preceded only, in time, by the Grand Lodge of England, established in the year 1717, followed in 1726 by that of the Grand Lodge of Munster, which merged into the Grand Lodge of Ireland 1729-30.

Pennsylvania Masonic history is intimately connected with that of the Grand Lodge of England of 1717, the "Moderns," under whose authority the very early Lodges of the Province were constituted ; but, in time, there came into existence the English Grand Lodge of 1751, known as the "Ancients," or "York Masons," being in accord with the old constitution. This period in Masonic history was known in England as the "Great Schism."

As the new Lodge was more liberal in granting warrants than the older one, and was especially active in issuing traveling or army warrants, of which some forty-nine came to the American Colonies during and after the French Wars, *i. e.*, from 1746 to 1764, it speedily supplanted its more conservative sister, and in time, largely through political causes

incident to the Revolution, the Pennsylvania Brethren felt constrained to renounce their fealty to the Provincial Grand Lodge of 1730 and to fraternize with the newer "Ancient York Masons," until, by 1793, the last vestige of the "Moderns" appears on record. (*Sachse.*)

Who can estimate the benefits conferred upon mankind by Masonry? In its operative form, what temples, palaces and majestic buildings of all kinds have sprung from the hands of the Brotherhood; and when it developed into its present speculative existence, with its study of mathematics and its application to the arts and sciences, who can number its contribution to knowledge, its beneficent deeds of charity, its work for the uplifting of mankind, its dissemination on earth of the principles of peace and love to all men of good will, for which principle so many valuable lives have just been sacrificed upon the altar of patriotism, and without even referring to its almost interminable list of members occupying positions of the highest honor and trust in the gift of man.

Of this Grand Fraternity, St. John's Lodge, No. 435, is a conspicuous member. For fifty years it has been laying up stones, course upon course, in the great edifice of Masonry, testing them with the plumb, the level and the square, and with its trowel spreading the cement of brotherly love to unite them together. Does it have a right to exult in having attained thereto, or should it rather put on sackcloth and ashes in repentant sorrow for misdirected effort and time wasted?

In all humility we feel justified in asserting that we may well rejoice and thank the great Architect of the Universe that we have not proven derelict in duty but rather have been enabled, thus far, to do honor to Him and our Fraternity with credit to ourselves.

We have just rejoiced in the termination of our great World War, with its miseries and horrors beyond description, such as the mind of men could never have conceived nor imagined, and yet the total casualties in the American army throughout its period will hardly exceed two hundred



JOHN A. KEPELMAN
WORSHIPFUL MASTER

and fifty thousand men, not to be compared to those suffered by the two combatants in that terrible struggle which we call the Civil War, during which war the Union army alone, comprising about two and a quarter million men, almost precisely the number of Americans "overseas," lost four hundred thousand by death and three hundred thousand wounded, or thirty per cent. of the whole. In the war with Germany our total losses did not exceed twelve per cent.

The days of 1861-65 were dark indeed. With the continued absence of many brethren, and constant departure of others, frequently officers and leading members, together with the daily news of battles lost and won, of loved ones killed, wounded and missing, what more natural than that attention should be diverted from secret society matters, and that carelessness and neglect of lodge duties should ensue.

These years of lukewarmness induced habits which could not be overcome immediately, so that it need not be a matter of surprise to find that, in 1868, though three years after the close of the war, there existed in Reading, as doubtless elsewhere, a condition of affairs which, Masonically speaking, was, to say the least, undesirable. The work of the Fraternity was frequently performed in an imperfect manner by officers who failed to make themselves thoroughly conversant with it; the strict adherence to Masonic dress was overlooked; so little interest being taken by members themselves, desirable persons ceased to make application for membership, and more especially was this the case when it was rumored that several such who knocked at the door for admission failed to find it opened to them.

A condition like this could not long exist. A revival, rather a reformation, was bound to follow. Many good men and brethren, to whom their Fraternity was very dear, gave the matter much thought and were prepared to devote much time to its welfare. The historical facts demand that justice should be done our lamented Bro. Frederick S. Boas in naming him as the one who took the initiatory step in the matter, and who, beyond all others, brought it to a happy conclusion.

Realizing the futility of attempting to effect the needed reforms in those Lodges already in existence, on July 6, 1868, he, together with Bros. John McKnight, Edward H. Shearer, Edward P. Boas, William G. McGowan, Thomas F. Hemmich, Henry May Keim, Reese W. Frescoln, Christopher Loeser and Albert A. Simon, presented their resignations to Lodge No. 62 for the purpose of forming a new Masonic Lodge. They were accepted August 3, the following regular meeting. Whereupon, the then D. D. G. M., Bro. Joseph L. Stichter, read their petition praying for a warrant for a Lodge to be called "St. John's Lodge." This petition bore the following recommendation:

"We recommend that the prayer of this petition be granted: J. L. Stichter, D. D. G. M.; S. E. Ancona, D. E. Stout, Henry A. Tyson, Robert H. Pattison, Thomas T. Iaeger, F. P. Heller, Geo. W. Durell, W. J. Woodward, Hiester Clymer."

Unfortunately, the pure and worthy motives of the applicants were misunderstood to such an extent that more or less violent opposition arose to the granting of the request. It was reasoned that an additional body was unnecessary and would be an injury to the older organizations, which already filled all requirements needed for the welfare of the Fraternity in Reading and vicinity. Many interesting visits were paid by the Grand Officers, and many forcible arguments presented to them pro and con, but with the able assistance of the D. D. G. M., Bro. Stichter, who fully recognized the propriety of the application, aided by the untiring efforts of Bro. Boas and his co-workers, the Right Worshipful Grand Master, Bro. Richard Vaux, after a personal visit to Reading and an investigation of conditions, gave a favorable decision and the charter was granted.

The first day of March, A. D. 1869, A. L. 5869, witnessed a notable gathering of distinguished Masons, and the accomplishment of a fact most important in the history of this Lodge, with a bearing of no less importance in the history of the Fraternity in the City of Reading, when, at high noon, in the Masonic Hall, on the upper floor of the Ameri-



WARREN A. REBER
SENIOR WARDEN

can House, S. W. Cor. Fourth and Penn Streets, was constituted in Ancient Form, St. John's Lodge, No. 435, A. Y. M. Its officers and members were pledged to strictly adhere to the tenets of the Fraternity, to faithfully and accurately perform its work, to rigidly observe the full Masonic dress, and in every way to assist in elevating it to its rightful position. On this interesting occasion there were present the following Grand Officers:

Bro. Richard Vaux, R. W. Grand Master.
" R. A. Lamberton, R. W. Deputy Grand Master.
" Alfred R. Potter, R. W. Senior Grand Warden.
" John Bolt, Acting R. W. Junior Grand Warden *pro tem.*
" Charles H. Kingston, Acting R. W. Grand Treasurer *pro tem.*
" John Thompson, R. W. Grand Secretary.
" P. A. Weidner, R. W. Senior Grand Deacon.
" William H. Egle, R. W. Junior Grand Deacon.
" Jacob Laudenslager, } R. W. Grand Stewards.
" Samuel A. Wertz, }
" Joseph H. Boswell, R. W. Grand Marshal.
" Jacob Bennett, R. W. Grand Sword Bearer.
" Harrison G. Clark, R. W. Grand Pursuivant.
" Stephen Orth, Acting R. W. Grand Tyler *pro tem.*
" R. H. Pattison, } R. W. Grand Chaplains.
" John P. Lundy, }
" Joseph L. Stichter, R. W. District Deputy Grand Master.

The following brethren were installed as its first officers to serve during the unexpired term of the existing Masonic year:

Bro. Frederick S. Boas as Worshipful Master.
" John McKnight as Senior Warden.
" Edward H. Shearer as Junior Warden.
" Edward P. Boas as Treasurer.
" William G. McGowan as Secretary.

At the succeeding meeting the W. M. made the following appointments:

Bro. Thomas F. Hemmich as Senior Deacon.
" Henry M. Keim as Junior Deacon.
" Reese W. Frescoln as Senior Master of Ceremonies.
" Christopher Loeser as Junior Master of Ceremonies.
" Albert A. Simon as Pursuivant.
" Bernard Peters as Chaplain.

The first act of the Lodge was the presentation, through the Grand Master, of a beautiful jewel to Bro. D. D. G. M., Joseph L. Stichter, in grateful recognition of his friendship to the newly chartered body and kind services in its behalf.

Was there any necessity for the existence of St. John's Lodge at that time, or were the brethren who opposed its constitution justified in so doing? How can this question be better answered than by reference to recorded facts? At the first stated meeting, March 5, 1869, there were presented for approval twenty petitions for initiation and membership; at its next stated meeting, April 2, twenty more; and the close of the Masonic year 1870 showed a result of eighty initiations and five memberships. Weekly meetings for the conferring of degrees became necessary, and were continued, practically without intermission, until the year 1875, notwithstanding that a severe business depression with accompanying "hard times" spread widely over the country beginning with the year 1873. Even this merely checked, temporarily, the onward progress of the Lodge. Special meetings for "work" have been the rule and practice to the present time.

The continued zeal of Bro. Frederick S. Boas added materially to the great welfare of his Lodge. Not satisfied with the excellent manner in which he himself and his fellow officers invariably did the "work," obtained with absolute correctness from the first authorities amongst the Grand Officers, he held frequent Lodges of Instruction, so that his brethren might become equally proficient and that the high standard already attained might never be lowered by his successors. This standard has never been lowered, and the name of Bro. Boas will always be remembered, with affectionate esteem, by those who profited from his guidance. His Lodges of Instruction eventually developed, January, 1902, into the Reading School of Instruction as at present constituted.

Numerous as were its meetings the attendance never failed to be encouragingly large. Who will forget how much impressed he was as his eyes first looked upon one of these



JAMES M. BITLER
JUNIOR WARDEN

gatherings, where all were clad in true Masonic dress and where all comported themselves with true Masonic dignity?

The day St. John's Lodge was constituted saw the birth of a new era in Masonry, so far as the City of Reading was concerned. Those who smiled at a reference to the "Silk Stocking Lodge" nevertheless attended its meetings as visitors, noted the dignified appearance of its members present, saw a perfection of work to which but few were accustomed, and then went home to ponder over what they had seen—and to emulate it. As a result Masonry in Reading may well be an object of pride today to the Grand Body whence it sprang.

At the stated meeting of August 6, 1869, the By-Laws were adopted as recommended by the Committee, consisting of the W. M., S. W. and J. W. Amongst other wholesome laws enacted was then established a Relief Fund, which was not to be drawn upon until it had reached the capital sum of \$10,000, the interest of which it was felt would be sufficient for any probable cases of distress amongst the deserving brethren. By 1886 this capital sum, as originally provided, had been exceeded, whereupon, at the stated meeting of February 5, 1886, a Committee, appointed to consider the subject, recommended an amendment to the By-Laws to the effect "That every member, not exempt by a vote of the Lodge, shall pay annually, on or before the night of the annual election, the sum of Five Dollars (as before) for a period of sixteen years, and, thereafter, the sum of Three Dollars; provided, however, that this reduction shall not take effect until all arrearages are paid." In due time this amendment was approved, taking effect from and after St. John the Evangelist's Day, 1885.

Of those who now gather together, from time to time, in the impressive Lodge Room of today's Masonic Temple, but few are able to look back fifty years to our first home on the upper floor of the American House, of which the Fraternity had first taken possession on Wednesday evening, January 5, 1859. The room then occupied extended over the entire length of the rear building, its dimensions being 40 by 70

feet, and was reached by a stairway whose entrance was on Fourth Street. It was difficult of access, poorly ventilated and heated, and adjoining, as it did, other parts of the hotel property, had been declared Masonically unsafe.

At various times efforts were made by the Lodges, individually and collectively, to secure a property for the sole use of the Fraternity, all of which proved unavailing. The first active effort was in 1857. Again, in 1867, an attempt was made to purchase the United States Hotel property on the North side of Penn Square between Fourth and Fifth Streets, which came near succeeding. Then an attempt was made to obtain a lot on the northeast corner of Sixth and Walnut Streets. And in 1869 a conference was held with the city authorities with a view of obtaining a suitable room for Lodge purposes through them.

So the years passed by without results. Finally, in 1872, the proper city authorities tendered the third story of the City Hall, on the N. E. corner of Fifth and Franklin Streets, to the Masonic Fraternity at an annual rental of Three Hundred Dollars, and the joint Board of Trustees, appointed by the several Lodges, advised its acceptance.

This was well enough as far as it went, but it did not fully meet the situation. It required a reference for action to each individual body, which meant unavoidable and interminable delay, with the possibility of a lack of harmonious decision, which would have proved fatal to success in reaching the desired result, as the offer of the authorities made requisite a prompt acceptance or rejection.

Then, "prompted solely by motives for the best interests, the comfort and the welfare of the entire Masonic Brotherhood," and looking, as ever, to a brighter future on a higher plane of usefulness, St. John's Lodge, the youngest of the sisters, boldly assumed the risk alone, and at its stated meeting of May 3, 1872, once more led the van in progressive movement by passing the resolution of Bro. Frederick S. Boas directing its Trustees to rent the offered room in the City Hall for the term of ten years at the sum named.

The matter was taken in hand at once, and the room ar-



HENRY M. FEGLEY
TREASURER

ranged to make it entirely suitable and convenient for the purpose intended. The hall was furnished at an expense of fully \$5,000, and in a manner never previously attempted in the City of Reading, and with so much celerity was all this accomplished that on the evening of Monday, June 24, 1872, the festival of St. John the Baptist, the members were able to hold their first meeting in their new and beautiful home. In the presence of a large concourse of brethren the Worshipful Master handed the gavel to D. D. Grand Master Sydenham E. Ancona, honoring him with the privilege of presiding on that happy occasion. After prayer by the Chaplain, Rev. Giles Bailey, and music, the R. W. Past Grand Master, Hon. Richard Vaux, delivered an able and eloquent address on "What and How Masonry Teaches." Another selection of music closed a most joyous and important event in the history of the Lodge.

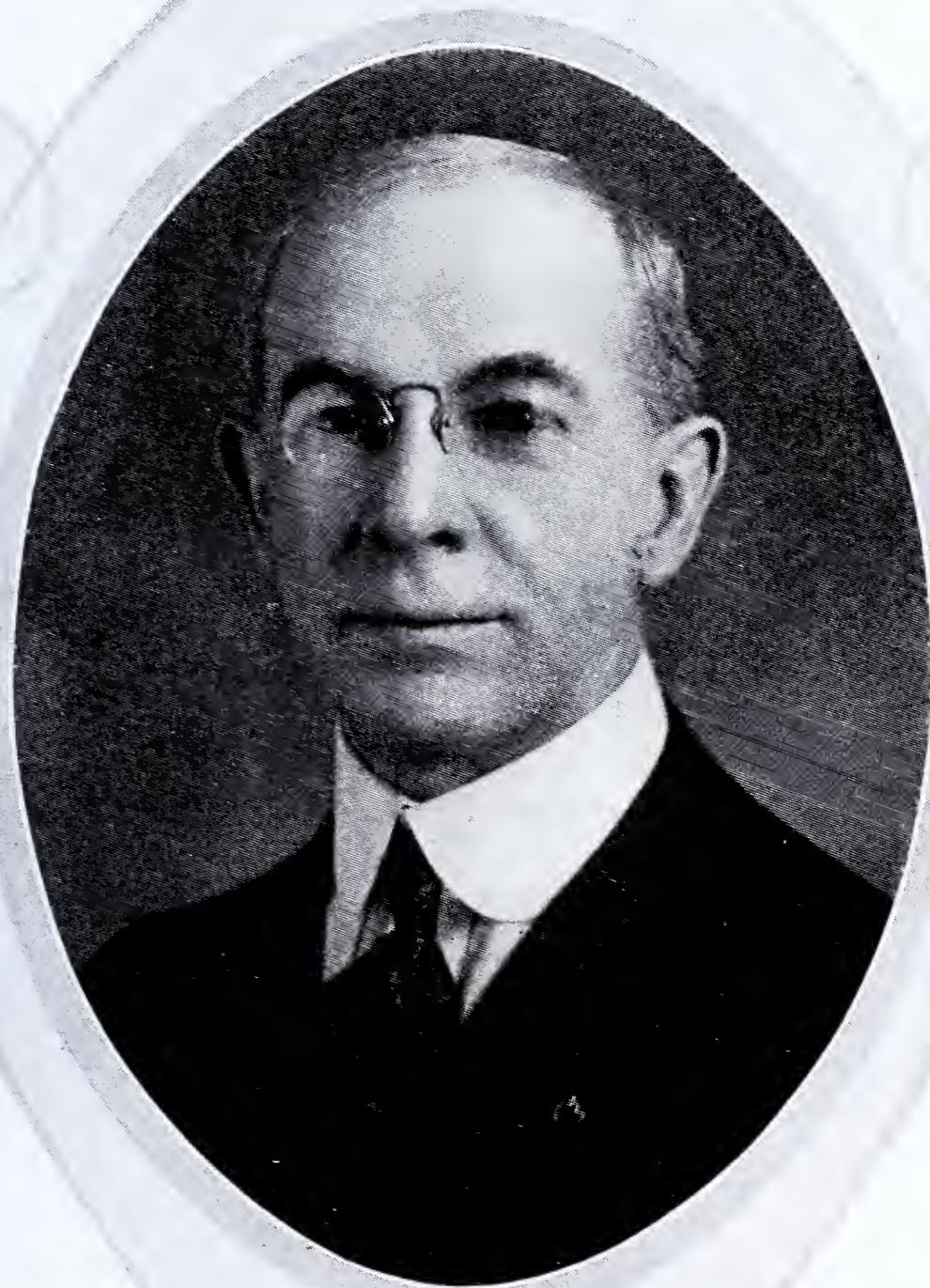
The increased attendance of members and visitors was at once noticeable, especially with regard to the latter, who fully appreciated the greater comfort and beauty of the new room. The result was that other bodies speedily began occupying it and, before long, the entire Masonic Fraternity in the city was glad to call it their home. At the stated meeting of January 2, 1874, a communication was received from Excelsior H. R. A. Chapter, No. 237, Reading, H. R. A. Chapter, Reading Commandery and Chandler Lodge, No. 227, A. Y. M., asking upon what terms a part ownership in the furniture might be purchased. As the original movement of the Lodge had been of an entirely unselfish character, so there was now every inclination to accede to the wish expressed by these bodies. The cost of furnishing was divided into five equal shares and the matter placed in the hands of the Trustees for adjustment, which resulted, by the end of the year, in the purchase of one share each by the three first parties named, and the retention by the Lodge of the remaining two shares, one of which was eventually, December 2, 1881, divided into four shares, one for each of the bodies in interest.

The evident prosperity of St. John's Lodge and the visit to

Philadelphia at the time the present stately New Temple was there dedicated, on September 26, 1873, were both, doubtless, instrumental in putting the unfortunate idea into the minds of some of the brethren that Reading needed a similar building, ignoring the fact that their recently acquired quarters were new, handsomely furnished, entirely suited to the purpose and would probably not be surpassed by any hall in the building contemplated.

It was certainly an ill-advised movement. At the very outstart it was found to be impossible to enlist the various lodges, as such, in the undertaking. Nevertheless a glowing array of figures was presented, backed up by vigorous argument, which resulted finally in the formation of a "Masonic Hall Association," composed of such individual Masons, and others, as saw fit to join in the undertaking.

At the stated meeting of October 1, 1875, an invitation was received from the Association to participate in the laying of the corner-stone at high noon on Thursday, October 7, 1875. While not in sympathy with the movement, yet this lack of sympathy was not due to any uncharitable feeling but solely because it was felt to be unwise and unnecessary. Therefore, the invitation so kindly extended was accepted in the same spirit. Having assembled at 10 A.M., the various subordinate lodges, in full Masonic dress, proceeded to the location of the proposed Temple, on the west side of North Sixth Street, between Washington and Walnut Streets, where, at the proper time, the corner-stone was laid with impressive ceremonies by the R. W. Grand Master of Pennsylvania, assisted by the other Grand Officers. Unfortunately, by the time the foundations were laid, and the wall erected as high as the second story, it was discovered that the funds were exhausted, the expenses having considerably surpassed the amount as calculated. As it was impossible to secure more money, it became necessary to abandon the entire work at a heavy loss. The building was eventually completed by others, and is no longer known as "The Masonic Temple," nor has it ever been used for Masonic purposes.



HARRY D. SIDEL
SECRETARY

The stated meeting of December 1, 1876, was memorable because it recorded the death of our venerable Tyler, Bro. Stephen Orth, who departed this life on Tuesday, November 21, and whose remains were accompanied to their final resting place on Friday, November 24, by the entire Masonic Fraternity of the city. To this day there are many of the older brethren remaining who will recall his familiar face and wonderful memory.

It was also memorable because, at that time a series of resolutions was presented by Bro. P. M. Edward H. Shearer, recommending to the R. W. Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania the granting of a warrant for the constitution of a new Masonic Lodge in the city of Reading, Reading Lodge, No. 549.

We can also rejoice in that we have been privileged to welcome into our midst, during these fifty years, another sister, Isaac Hiester Lodge, No. 660, to which a charter was granted by the R. W. Grand Lodge at its Quarterly Communication of September, 1908, and which, in due time, was properly constituted.

For twenty-three years, month after month, the room on the upper floor of the City Hall had witnessed the gathering of the brethren in comfort and harmony, but the time at last arrived when it was imperative that the old home should be abandoned.

Not only were the city authorities most anxious to utilize this space for the needs of a growing city, but the Fraternity itself was increasing to such an extent that other quarters had become a necessity.

This time there was no division of sentiment amongst the various bodies. All favored united action, as a Fraternity, towards the accomplishment of the desired end. It was no longer a question of undivided responsibility.

At its stated meeting of June 7, 1895, St. John's Lodge adopted a resolution whereby financial aid was pledged "towards the erection of a Masonic Temple, in conjunction with other Masonic Bodies of this city, provided said Temple shall be erected under the supervision of a Building or

Finance Trust composed of one member of each Masonic Body joining with St. John's Lodge, No. 435, and that the deed shall be made to them and their successors as Trustees." This was the inception of our present Temple.

The representatives of each body met, carefully considered the subject, and presented a communication to the several lodges, that to St. John's Lodge being received August 5, 1895, in which they provided for the formation of a Stock Company, under the proper Act of Assembly, recommending the establishment of a Building or Finance Trust with one representative from each body in interest, enumerating their duties and responsibilities, and estimating the cost of the proposed edifice at about \$65,000.

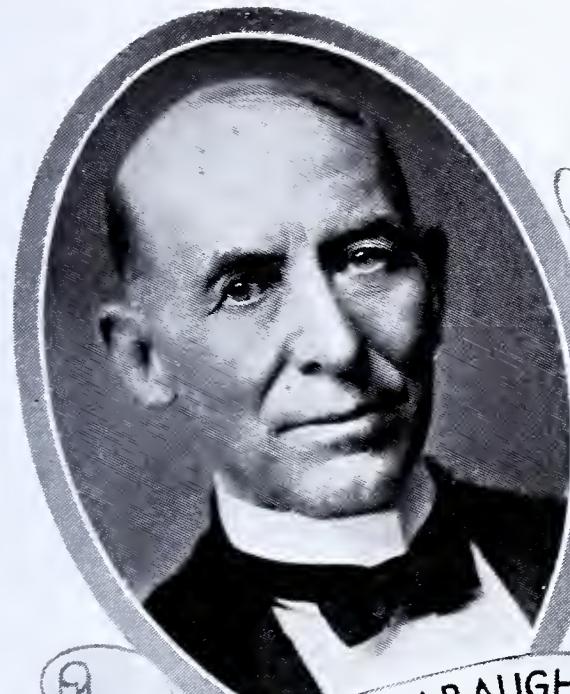
This plan was accepted and adopted by the Lodge and Bro. P. M. Adam H. Schmehl selected as its representative. The trustees met and organized under the title of "The Masonic Temple and Building Trust of Reading, Pa.," and elected the following officers: President, John H. Maltzberger; Vice-President, John Barbey; Treasurer, Calvin D. Moser; Secretary, Oscar B. Wetherhold.

After mature deliberation, and the investigation of numerous sites, they recommended the purchase of the Wilhelm property, Nos. 121, 123, 125 North Fifth Street, 60 x 230 feet, at the price of \$19,250, which was approved.

The corner-stone of the edifice was laid June 24, 1897, on St. John the Baptist's Day.

The difficulties encountered by the Trustees in carrying out the duties assigned them were far from light. Their trials, and how they were finally overcome, are still fresh in the recollections of the Fraternity and need not be retold. It is sufficient to say that, eventually, the present fine Temple became an accomplished fact, and bids fair to meet the needs of those who occupy it for many years to come.

On October 3, 1902, St. John's Lodge held the first stated meeting in the new Masonic Temple, at which there were present eighty-two of its officers and members, nineteen visiting brethren from Lodge No. 62, thirty-one from Lodge No. 227, six from Lodge No. 367, twenty-nine from Lodge



WILLIAM L. RABAUGH
CHAPLAIN



JAMES M. BILLIG
SENIOR DEACON



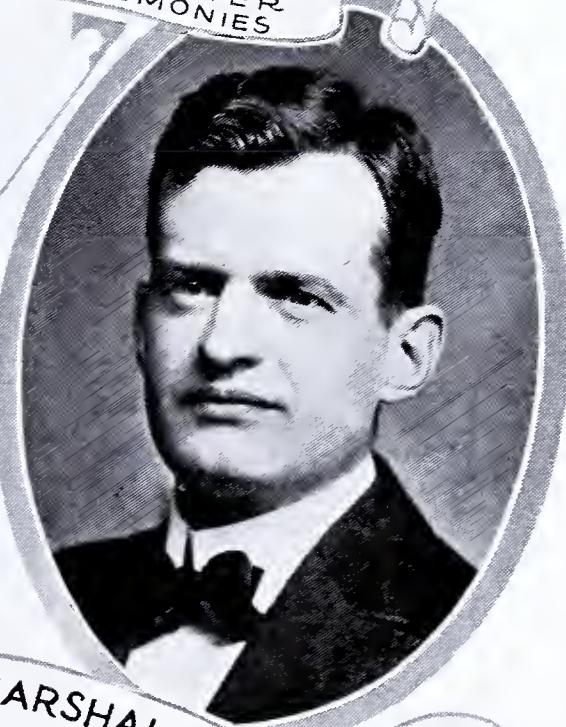
JOHN A. SWENCK
JUNIOR DEACON



BYRON B. MORTIMER
SENIOR MASTER
OF CEREMONIES



W. EARL BOYER
JUNIOR MASTER OF CEREMONIES



R. MARSHALL McGAW
PURSUIVANT

No. 549, and twenty-six from various other Lodges, with D. D. Grand Master Joseph W. Day as an honored guest, making a total of one hundred and ninety-four. An especially interesting feature of the gathering was the presentation to the Lodge, through Bro. P. M. Jenkin Hill, of a magnificent oil portrait of its founder, Bro. P. M. Frederick S. Boas. This was the first meeting of any body in the edifice, the total cost of which was approximately \$200,000.

He who scans the pages of St. John's Minute Books for the past fifty years will see a continuous record of work, hard and faithful work, with brief periods, here and there, when the members were called off from labor to refreshment. It was not all such work as the craft of old performed when still Operative Masons, nor entirely such as pertains to the more modern study of the arts and sciences as applied in Speculative Masonry, but much of it was the work of Brotherly Love, as it is but feebly expressed in one word "Charity."

On June 7, 1872, in the midst of the turmoil of changing quarters, and at the moment of assuming heavy obligations for that purpose, the sum of \$500 was appropriated towards a Masonic Home for aged and infirm brethren, electing at the same time Bro. P. M. Frederick S. Boas as its representative on its Committee of Management, and annually thereafter donating a substantial amount towards its maintenance. The project of its erection was under consideration for a number of years; it met with the official approval of the R. W. Grand Lodge on December 5, 1883, which recommended, however, that its erection and control be left in the hands of individual brethren who might voluntarily associate themselves together for that purpose, not deeming it advisable for the Grand Body to assume any financial responsibility. Such an Association was formed at once, St. John's Lodge subscribing for a membership in the same on April 4, 1884. Upon the decease of Bro. Boas, in February, 1888, a handsome, life-like oil painting of him, by one of our best artists, was most beautifully framed and presented to the Home by the Lodge, and has ever since adorned its walls.

The "Home for Aged and Indigent Master Masons," at Philadelphia, has long been a noteworthy institution, and, for years, has added untold happiness to the declining days of many aged brethren who might otherwise have been bowed down under their burden of sorrow and neglect.

On July 5, 1872, further progressive action was taken by the Lodge in the passage of a resolution inviting a joint meeting of the Charity Committee of the several lodges to formulate measures for the more systematic dispensation of charity. This was the initial step which eventually, by resolution presented by Bro. P. M. Adam H. Schmehl on September 6, 1895, led to the formation of the "Masonic Consolidated Charity Fund of the City of Reading," operated by officers selected annually by the several Charity Committees, and to which each body would be required to contribute an annual sum of twenty dollars, if necessary. To this Masonic Board of Relief are referred all petitions for charity emanating from brethren of lodges outside of the jurisdiction, and thus much unfairness avoided.

Charity, and ordinary brotherly courtesy, forbids that we should make mention of the numerous kindly acts towards deserving brethren, their widows and children, of advice, comfort and aid extended as most needed, and of money and material furnished where the recipient was never aware of the source whence it came.

On April 18, 1906, occurred the terrible earthquake at San Francisco, with its resulting great loss and suffering. The R. W. Grand Master promptly sent an urgent appeal on April 21 for contributions towards the relief of our suffering brethren in California, with which equally prompt compliance was made by St. John's Lodge in the shape of a generous subscription.

At its Quarterly Communication of September 2, 1908, there originated in the Grand Lodge a beneficent movement, on a scale hitherto never surpassed in this country, nor probably any other, looking towards the establishment of a Home or Homes for the relief of Masons, their wives, widows and children.



JENKIN HILL GRAND STEWARD 1912-13
DISTRICT DEPUTY GRAND MASTER 1914-1919

It is not germane to this subject to enter into minute description of this undertaking yet so fresh in the recollection of the brethren. It is sufficient to say that a very large tract near Elizabethtown, of some of the most fertile ground of rich Lancaster County, admirably adapted to the purpose, was purchased, and expert landscape plans laid out allowing for a handsome large main building, with every modern convenience, to be known as the "Grand Lodge Hall," this to be surrounded by groups of cottage homes, schools for minors with the advantage of a common school education, special training in domestic household and useful occupations and with every other variety of building necessary to the whole, including a chapel and hospital, reserving a sufficient portion of the land for agricultural purposes.

On September 26, 1911, the corner-stone was laid by the R. W. Grand Master with Masonic ceremonies, and on June 5, 1913, at high noon, the completed Grand Lodge Hall was dedicated with imposing ceremony, in both of which St. John's Lodge took a conspicuous part, and to which, it is needless to say, it had contributed its proportionate share of the cost.

To such an extent did this worthy object appeal to the brethren that, at its stated meeting July 1, 1910, a committee was appointed, consisting of Bros. Jenkin Hill, Harry D. Sidel and Charles E. Leippe, to consult with similar committees to be appointed by the other Masonic bodies, looking to the erection of a suitable memorial on the grounds of the then proposed new Home; but apparently this further progressive action of St. John's did not meet with response from others, and it was not until February 7, 1913, that the project received new life through the efforts of the D. D. Grand Master Bro. Adam H. Schmehl.

Today the Berks County Memorial, beautiful in appearance, known as "Berks Home," helps to adorn the grounds of the Home at Elizabethtown as a monument to the successful action of St. John's and its sister lodges of the Seventh District.

Masonry is neither allowed nor disposed to stand on a

pedestal and publicly proclaim its doings, nor does it boast of its membership. Were it to do so it might well cause astonishment to see the long list of distinguished persons who did not think it beneath them to voluntarily associate themselves with the craft, and to take an active interest in its work.

“Brethren of the Fraternity assisted in founding as well as defending this great country. They were members of the Continental Congress and of Committees to Draft the Declaration of Independence, Articles of Confederation, and the Federal Constitution. They were among the defenders of the country in the French and Indian War, the Revolutionary War, the War of 1812, and the Spanish-American War (also the great World War just ended). They have given of their time and substance, their lives and limbs to preserve the liberty of their country and the rights of the people. Benjamin Franklin was an honored member, and from Brother George Washington to Brother William H. Taft (also Theodore Roosevelt) fourteen Presidents of the United States have been members of the craft.” (*Right Worshipful Past Grand Master Bro. J. Henry Williams.*)

On November 5, 1902, was celebrated, by the Grand Lodge, in Corinthian Hall of the Masonic Temple at Philadelphia, the Sesqui-Centennial Anniversary of the initiation of Bro. George Washington into our Ancient and Honorable Fraternity (which occurred on November 4, 1752). In this St. John’s Lodge participated by sending a representative, it being physically impossible to accommodate more than one member of each Lodge. An eloquent address was delivered by the President of the United States, Bro. Theodore Roosevelt, before the great throng there in attendance.

A similar celebration of local character was held, on November 3, 1902, in Lodge No. 62, the oldest in this jurisdiction, where there was a large representation of all the Lodges, and where those present were privileged to hear most able addresses by Brothers William Arnold Shanklin and J. Henry Williams, which were ordered to be printed.

As various changes had been made in the original By-



Laws of the Lodge it was decided to revise them in their entirety. The new laws were read at the stated meeting of June 3, 1910, reread at the meeting of July 1, acted upon separately by sections, adopted and referred to the Grand Lodge for approval, which approval was given at the Quarterly Communication of September 7, 1910, and the same then went into effect.

We have had so much to record of a pleasant character that we are loath to turn to that which is sad, but the Divine Architect has decreed that nothing in this changing world shall have an abiding place, so that we may fully realize we are but sojourners here and pilgrims on our way to a better country. Our craft has built magnificent temples, but He laid His finger upon them and they disappeared from sight; yes, even the memory of mankind. The names and fame of some of our Grand Masters may never perish while the earth exists, but their bodies have long since gone back to the dust whence they sprang, to be raised again at the proper time, as we all believe.

To enumerate all the brethren who have been called to their eternal reward would be impossible in a work of this character. We must therefore confine ourselves to a mere mention of some of the very early and more prominent ones.

Our first "Lodge of Sorrow" was held on February 4, 1873, to pay a last Masonic tribute to our deceased Bro. Emanuel Missimer; this was followed on November 1, 1876, by the death of our venerable Tyler Bro. Stephen Orth, and then on May 16, 1878, the members of St. John's Lodge were called upon to mourn the loss of our venerable and greatly beloved Chaplain, Bro. Rev. Giles Bailey.

The first break in the rank of the Past Masters took place September 29, 1881, when the brethren were called upon to bid a sorrowful farewell to their late Bro. Reese W. Frescoln, whose decease was followed by that of Bro. P. M. John McKnight on December 22, 1882.

The writer of these recollections knows that he is but expressing the feeling of the older members of the Lodge when he speaks of the sadness which he experienced when, after

glancing over the minutes as recorded by the Secretary, Bro. William G. McGowan, for eighteen years, he came to those of March 4, 1887, where, for the last time was written the words, "Nothing further appearing, the Lodge closed in harmony at 8 $\frac{1}{4}$ o'clock P.M." So, after the years spent in doing the work of his beloved Lodge, when nothing further appeared that he could accomplish, and the evening had already set in, it truly closed "in harmony," and his soul returned to his Maker. After a lingering illness death occurred June 23, 1887.

Hardly had these sad rites been performed when the brethren were called upon to suffer another loss, correspondingly great, in the decease of Bro. P. M. Frederick S. Boas, the founder of the Lodge and its master spirit from the beginning, to whose untiring zeal and words of caution, as well as wisdom, has been due much of its prosperity and its prominence so justly acquired. His funeral, largely attended by many distinguished Masons, took place February 28, 1888.

Probably the most sorrowful event in the history of Berks Masonry was the terrible railroad calamity, on May 11, 1907, the wreck at Honda, California, of the train containing those returning from the gathering of the Knights Templar. All the lodges in Reading, save Chandler, No. 227, suffered loss. St. John's Lodge was called upon to mourn the death of its Bro. Harrison P. Hendel. Both Chandler Lodge and Pulaski Lodge, No. 216, of Pottsville, were kind enough to send resolutions of condolence on that occasion.

St. John's Lodge has been signally honored by the appointment of various of its members to positions of high standing in the Fraternity. Bro. Frederick S. Boas, its founder, besides his general prominence in the Order, was a member of the Board of Management for the Masonic Home in Philadelphia from its inception to the time of his death.

Bro. P. M. Edward H. Shearer was appointed District Deputy Grand Master of the jurisdiction, serving, as such, continuously from December 27, 1877, to the close of 1884, and was Grand Sword Bearer to R. W. Grand Master J. Simpson Africa from December 27, 1890, to the close of 1891.



DANIEL C. CLOUS
1877



JOHN E. HILL
1878



HENRY D. BRENEISER
1875



HENRY M. M. RICHARDS
1880



THOMAS G. PRINTZ
1881

Bro. P. M. Adam H. Schmehl was District Deputy Grand Master from December 27, 1903, to the close of 1913.

Bro. P. M. Jenkin Hill was Grand Steward 1911-1912, and then received the appointment of District Deputy Grand Master, which exalted position he still occupies, serving with honor to himself and the bodies in his jurisdiction.

A good Mason is a good citizen, and, when our Divine Grand Master lays out his plans on the trestle-board of our earth, it is for him to aid in carrying them out. God's great plan has been to bring freedom into the entire world and with it resultant peace and happiness. Unfortunately, this freedom could only be attained through much travail and by the shedding of much blood.

St. John's Lodge came into existence shortly after the close of one great war, and has passed through the experience of two more. Here, again, its members have not failed, though many of them, because of age, were not privileged to participate.

CIVIL WAR

Bro. P. M. Frederick S. Boas was much interested in military affairs, becoming, in 1855, captain of the "Reading Rifles." During the war he commanded Co. I, 20th Regt. P. V. M., and saw service in the Antietam campaign of September, 1862.

Bro. P. M. John McKnight was captain of Co. E, 42nd Regt. P. V. M., serving during July and August, 1863, incident to the Gettysburg campaign.

Bro. P. M. Edward H. Shearer was District Attorney for the Berks County courts from 1868 to 1871, and a member of the Senate of Pennsylvania from 1880 to 1884.

Bro. P. M. Daniel C. Clous served as musician, aged 13 years, in Co. E, 46th Regt. P. V., mustered in August 14, 1861, engaged at Winchester, Cedar Mountain, Antietam, Chancellorsville, Gettysburg and Lookout Mountain, after which, attached to the Army of Tennessee, under General Rosecrans, and marched with Sherman to Atlanta, Georgia, where he was discharged October 2, 1864.

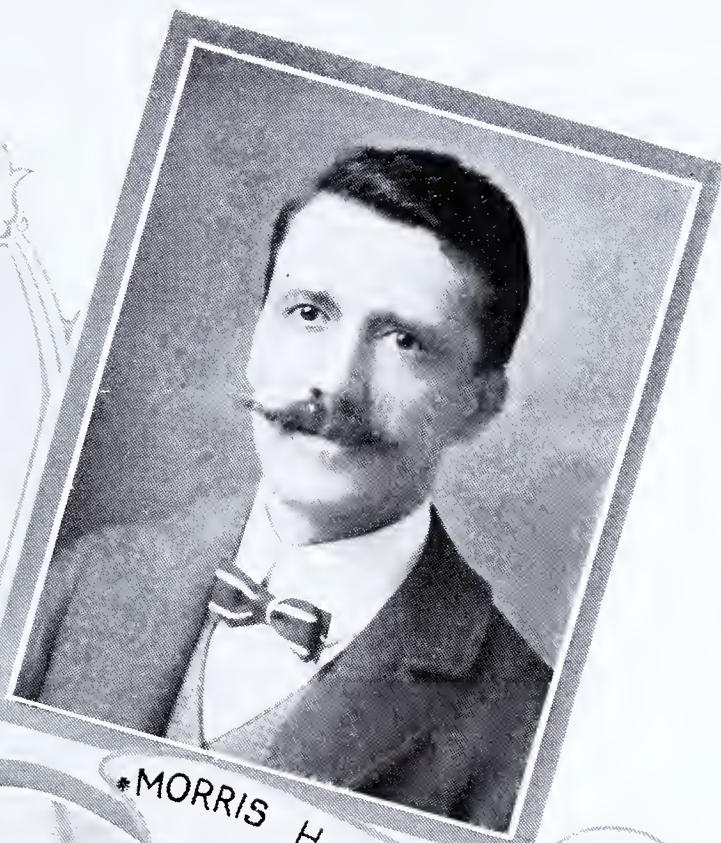
Bro. P. M. Henry M. M. Richards served as a private in Co. A, 26th Emer. Regt. P. V., in 1863 at the battle of Gettysburg and during its campaign; private in Co. A, 195th Regt. P. V. in 1864 under Sheridan in West Virginia; as an officer in the United States Navy from 1865 to 1875, during which time actively engaged in connection with the Franco-German War of 1870-71; the Communistic Outbreak and Carlist Insurrection of the same period; at Tunis, Africa, to avert a threatened outbreak against the Christians in 1870; in the Revolution at Panama of 1873; with the Tiburon Island Savages and Yaqui Indians in the Gulf of California 1874; volunteered in anticipation of war with Chile in 1892; served through the Spanish-American War of 1898 as an officer in Admiral Sampson's fleet; volunteered for service during the war with Germany; appointed by Governor Patterson on the Commission on Frontier Forts of Pennsylvania; appointed by Governor Brumbaugh on the Commission for Preservation of Public Records; member of Commission on the History of Pennsylvania in the late great World War; director of Naval Service on the Committee of Public Safety and Council of National Defense for Lebanon County; member and officer in many military and historical societies of this country, England and France; author of many standard historical works; given degree of Litt. D. by Muhlenberg College 1910. He was for many years Treasurer of the American Iron and Steel Manufacturing Company, now City Treasurer of Lebanon, Pa.

Bro. P. M. William M. Wells, private Co. E, 46th Regt. P. V., mustered in February 6, 1864, participating with his regiment as a part of Sherman's army in its Atlanta campaign and great march to the sea, also private Co. C, 42nd Regt. P. V. M., in the Gettysburg campaign of 1863.

Bro. P. M. Henry M. Keim was a private in Co. I, 11th Regt. P. V. M., in the Antietam campaign of 1862; Lieut. Co. A, 53rd Regt. P. V. M., 1863, when he was appointed Ordnance officer of the Lehigh District by Major General Franz Sigel, and retained in service for some months after the muster out of his company; in June, 1885, he was appointed



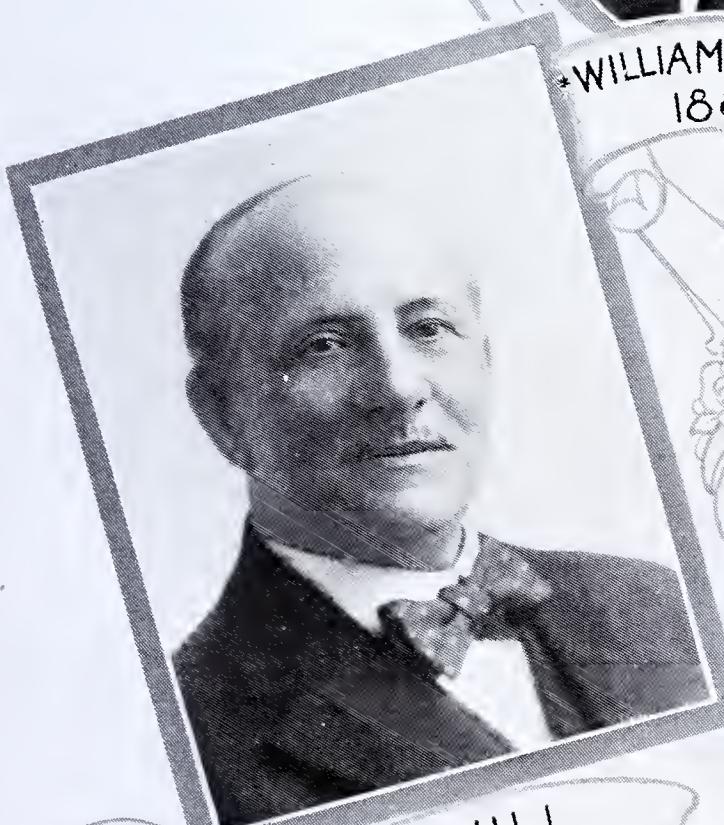
*HENRY M. KEIM
1883



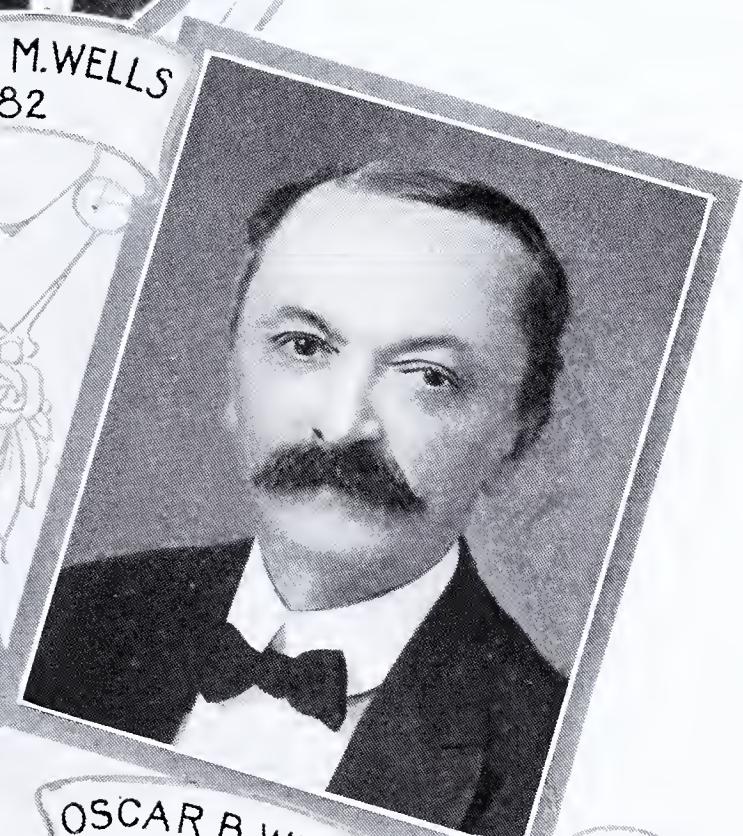
*MORRIS H. SCHAFFER
1884



*WILLIAM M. WELLS
1882



JENKIN HILL
1885



OSCAR B. WETHERHOLD
1886

U. S. Consul at Prince Edward Island by President Cleveland.

Bro. P. M. Jenkin Hill, besides the honorable position of District Deputy Grand Master which he now occupies, was further signally honored by having that splendid soldier and citizen, General D. McM. Gregg, select him as his assistant while serving as Auditor General of Pennsylvania for the term beginning 1892.

Bro. Christopher Loeser, Second Lieutenant in Durell's Battery, served during the war, in action at Kelly's Ford, Bristoe Station, Second Bull Run, Antietam, Sulphur Springs, Fredericksburg, Vicksburg, the Wilderness, and the closing operation of the war.

Bro. Harrison Maltzberger, Captain Co. B, 195th Regt. P. V., served under Sheridan in 1864 in West Virginia, also as First Lieutenant of Co. E, 11th Regt. P. V. M., in the Antietam campaign of 1862, and First Lieutenant Co. D, 42nd Regt. P. V. M., in Gettysburg campaign of 1863.

Bro. Richmond L. Jones served on the "Atlanta," Captain Ridgely, in the expedition of 1858 against Lopez, in Paraguay, ascending the Parana River one thousand miles into the interior of South America, acting as Lieutenant of one of the landing companies; peace concluded the following year he joined, at Vienna, his father, Hon. J. Glancy Jones, then minister to Austria; served in Co. E, 11th Regt. P. V. M., during the Antietam campaign of 1862, and as Captain of Co. A, 53rd Regt. P. V. M., in the Gettysburg campaign of 1863; member of Pennsylvania Legislature 1866-67-68.

Bro. William H. Clous served as musician in Co. B, 93rd Regt. P. V., throughout the war, participating in all the actions of that excellent organization, Williamsburg, Fair Oaks, Malvern Hill, Chancellorsville, Gettysburg and elsewhere.

Bro. Frank R. Schmucker, Captain Co. A, 128th Regt. P. V., 1862-63, in action at Antietam and Chancellorsville, also Adjutant 42nd Regt. P. V. M., in Gettysburg campaign of 1863.

Bro. Andrew Lotz, Corporal Co. D, 198th Regt. P. V., en-

gaged at Peeble's Farm, South Side Railroad, Welden Railroad, Hatchers Run, Dinwiddie Court House, Lewis' Farm and White Oak Road, where he was wounded.

Bro. Cyrus J. Butler, Private Co. I, 179th Regt. P. D. M., in service 1862-63 in Virginia and in connection with the Gettysburg campaign. Re-enlisted 1864, Sergeant Co. D, 198th Regt. P. V., for one year 1st Brigade, 1st Div., 5th Corps.

Bro. George F. Wells, Private Co. C, 42nd Regt. P. V. M., in the Gettysburg campaign of 1863.

Bro. George H. Corbit, Private Co. B, 33rd Regt. P. V., served from 1861 to 1864 in all the operations of that regiment, one of the splendid regiments of the Pennsylvania Reserve Corps.

Bro. Andrew Mittower, Private Co. G, 49th Regt., Ohio Infantry.

Bro. Albert Thalheimer, Private Co. B, 23rd Regt., 4th Brigade, 1st Division, 6th Corps. Enlisted June, 1861; discharged June, 1865. Taken prisoner June 1, 1864, and was in Andersonville eleven months.

Bro. P. M. Albert Ritter, Corporal Co. E, 11th Regt. P. V. M., in Antietam campaign of 1862; Co. E, 42nd Regt. in Gettysburg campaign of 1863.

Bro. Edward A. Howell, Private Co. A, 42nd Regt. P. V. M., in Gettysburg campaign of 1863, also as private of Co. G, 20th Regt. P. V. M., in Antietam campaign of 1862.

Bro. Arthur A. Wells, Musician Co. C, 167th Regt. P. D. M., served from November 4, 1862, to August 11, 1863, in the Army of the James, engaged in the fight at Deserted Farm and in repelling the operations against the line south of that river; later in pursuit of Lee's army after the battle of Gettysburg.

Bro. William G. Biehl, Private Co. A, 195th Regt. P. V., served 1864-1865 under Sheridan in West Virginia.

Bro. William R. DeHart, Co. D, 15th Regt., 3rd Battalion, 14th Corps.

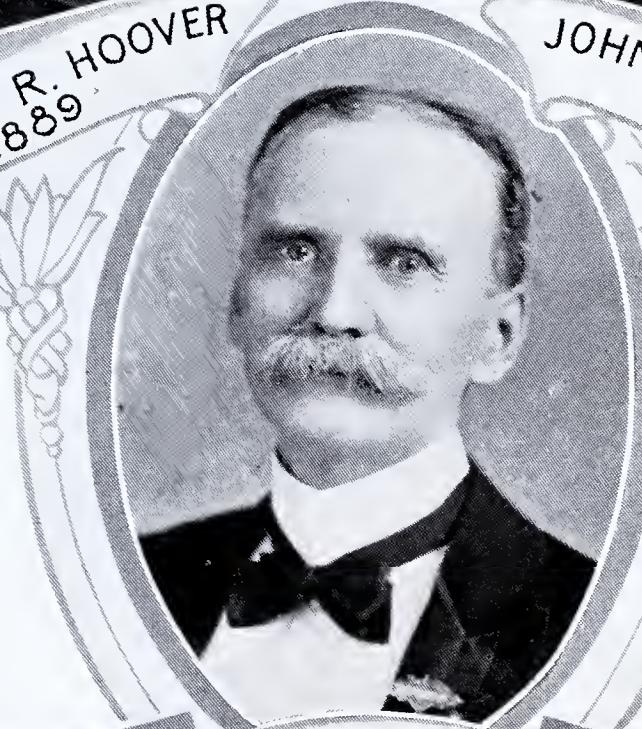
Bro. James Delong, Captain Co. A, 20th Rgt., Indiana Veteran Volunteer Infantry, 2nd Brigade, 1st Division, 3rd Corps, Army of the Potomac.



*ALBERT R. HOOVER
1889



JOHN R. HENDEL
1890



*ADAM H. SCHMEHL
1887-88



*HARRY L. WHITELOCK
1891



FRANK A. TYSON
1894

Bro. Henry J. Fink, Co. B, 128th Regt. P. V., 1862, 1863, 1st Brigade, 1st Division, 12th Army Corps, battle of Antietam and Chancellorsville. Re-enlisted, 1864, Private Co. B, 195th Regt. P. V., 1st Brigade, 1st Division, 8th Corps, serving under Sheridan in West Virginia.

Bro. David Henry, Co. F, 7th Penna. Cavalry, Army of the Tennessee, served from February 22, 1864, to August 23, 1865, battle of Planter'sville and Selma, Ala., Lovejoy Station, Ga., and Columbus, Ga.

Bro. Henry E. Lewis, Corporal Co. D, 42nd Regt. P. V. M., serving during July and August, 1863, incident to the Gettysburg campaign.

Bro. William McLoud enlisted in 1861 for three years in Co. A, 2nd Regt., Ohio Volunteer Cavalry.

Bro. Benjamin F. Nagle, Private Co. B, 128th Regt. P. V., 1862, 1863, 1st Brigade, 1st Division, 12th Corps, wounded in the abdomen by a shell at the battle of Antietam.

Bro. John L. Westley enlisted October 3, 1861, in Co. I, 6th Regt., Penna. Cavalry (Lancers) under Colonel Rush. Served under Generals Merritt, Stoneman and Sheridan. Discharged October 15, 1864.

SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR

The Spanish-American War was of comparatively short duration and necessitated the enlistment of but a limited number of men. Those of our brethren who saw service at this time and in connection with the subsequent troubles in the Philippine Islands were:

P. M. Henry M. M. Richards, who was an officer in Admiral Sampson's fleet and took part in all the operations in the West Indies, about Cuba and Porto Rico.

Corporal Charles J. S. Behm, Company M, 12th Regiment, U. S. Infantry, saw service in the Philippine Islands. He is at present in the service of the Y. M. C. A. somewhere in France.

George DeLong, Company E, 4th Regiment, Penna. Volunteers, 1st Division, 1st Army Corps. Service in Porto Rico.

Corporal George A. Sands, Company A, 4th Regiment, Penna. Volunteers, 2nd Brigade, 1st Division, 1st Army Corps. Service in Porto Rico.

First Lieutenant John K. Stauffer, 9th Penna. Infantry, U. S. Volunteers.

WAR WITH GERMANY

This great struggle would seem to be the culmination of the Divine plan to bring, eventually, the blessing of freedom to all of His creatures in this world. St. John's Lodge may, therefore, congratulate itself upon the honorable record, given below, of its members in that war.

P. M. Henry M. M. Richards made strenuous efforts, both with the Navy and Army, to be commissioned, once more, for service, and received most flattering letters from both Departments on the subject; but, under existing legal requirements, it was impossible to comply with his request, because of age.

First Sergeant Frank H. Althouse, 368th Aero Squadron, 17th Detachment, special duty, air service production, laboratory building, Langley Field, Hampton, Va.

Corporal Carl H. Boas, Ordnance Headquarters, 3rd Division, P. O. 740 (France), A. E. F.

Captain Clarence S. DeLong, enlisted September 20th, 1917, assigned to the dental corps, Fort Sill, Oklahoma (Base Hospital.)

J. Allison Gring, 13th Regiment, Battery B, 60th Division, F. A. R. D.

Arthur R. Kemmerling, Battery C, 14th Regiment, F. A. R. D., Camp Jackson.

Lewis B. Kramer, 8th Trench Mortar Bn., Fort Barrancas, Fla.

Paul R. Leininger, enlisted September 18th, 1918, sent to Lehigh University and assigned to the Engineers. Discharged December 7, 1918.

William L. Savidge, Company M, 23rd U. S. Engineers (France), A. E. F.

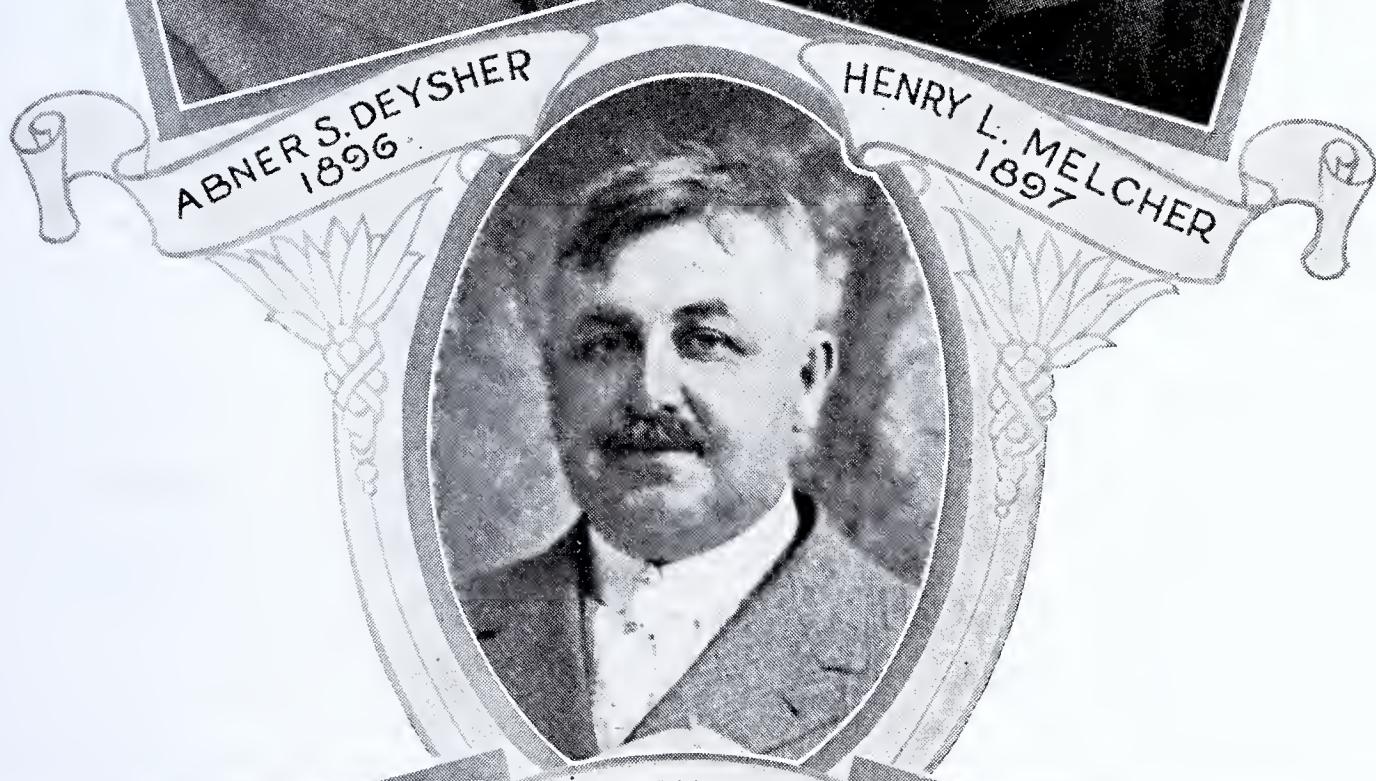
Harold H. Schofer, 21st Engineers (France), A. E. F.



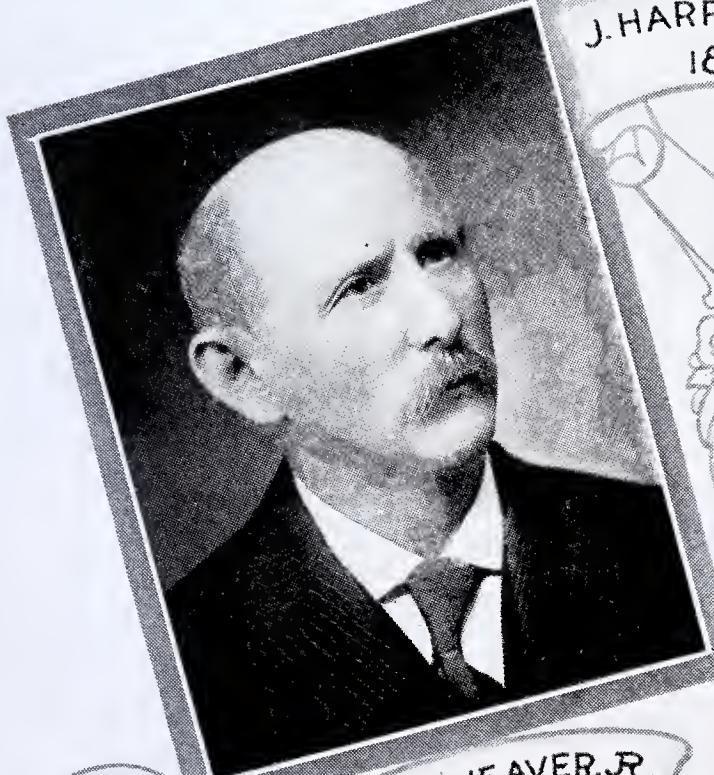
ABNER S. DEYSHER
1896



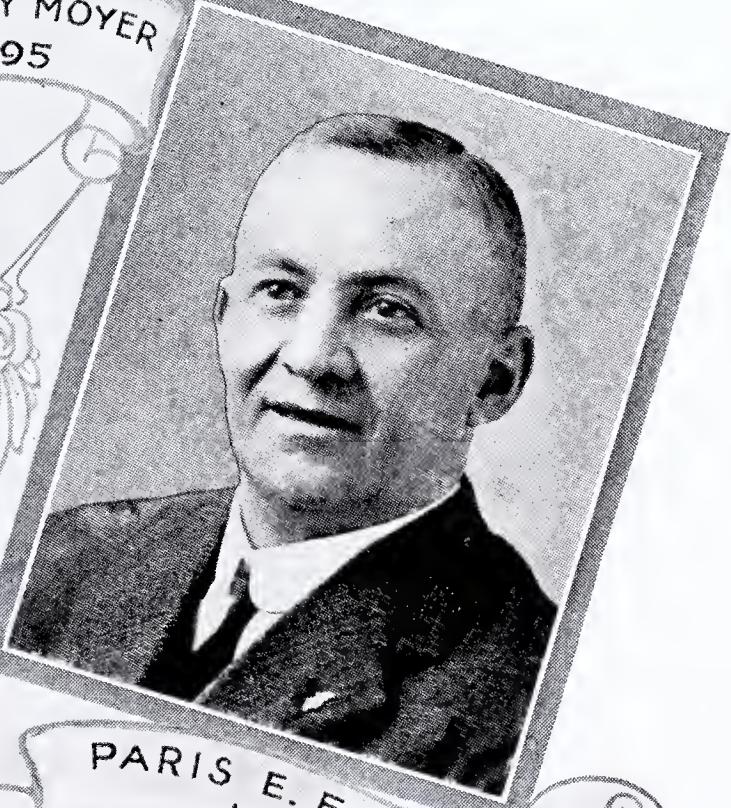
HENRY L. MELCHER
1897



J. HARRY MOYER
1895



EBENEZER P. WEAVER, JR.
1898



PARIS E. EACHES
1899

First Lieutenant Wayne L. Shearer, Medical Staff, U. S. Base Hospital, Camp Meade, Md.

Walter R. Beyerly, Marine Service (enlisted.)

Levi M. DeTurk, Musician, 312th Field Artillery (France), A. E. F.

Lieutenant Thomas F. Erdman, M. C., Washington, D. C.

Corporal Amos W. Huyett, enlisted December 13, 1917, in Ordnance Corps, assigned to Nitrate Division, Washington, D. C.

Sergeant C. Gilbert Hintz, Company D, 4th Battalion, I. R. & T., Camp Lee, Va.

First Lieutenant George W. Krick, Medical Corps (France), A. E. F. Gassed while performing his duties on September 14, 1918.

First Sergeant J. Douglas Kaufman, 2nd Construction Company, Air Service (England), A. E. F.

Josiah W. Leinbach, Headquarters Co. 312th F. A., Camp Meade, Md.

Captain Harry K. Merryfield, 65th Field Artillery, Camp Kearney, Cal.

John H. Moyer, enlisted in Cavalry, May, 1918, assigned to 311th Cavalry, Fort Riley, Kansas.

Second Lieutenant Joseph S. Phillips, 135th Field Artillery (France), A. E. F.

First Lieutenant Frederick L. Schaffer, Ordnance R. C.

Leon B. Schofer, Headquarters Co., Rep. & Tr. Camp, Camp Lee, Va.

Harry K. Schlegel, Field Hospital, Co. 6, Camp Greenleaf, Ga.

Harold T. Snyder, enlisted in the Navy in 1918.

Franklin B. Schaeffer, Replacement Unit No. 69, Medical Department (France), A. E. F.

Captain Jesse L. Wagner, enlisted 1918 in Medical Corps and assigned to Battalion 3, Company 10, Camp Greenleaf, Ga.

Every effort has been made to have the above lists complete. It is hoped that no name was omitted.

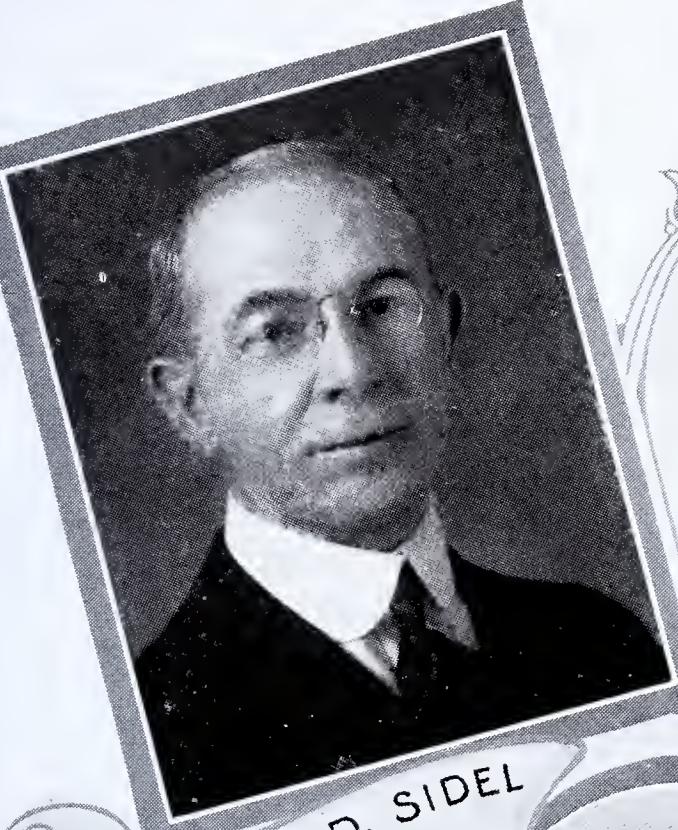
For fifty years St. John's Lodge has labored faithfully, strenuously and honorably, and, for fifty years, its laborers have been called off, at times, to needed refreshment.

Anniversary has succeeded anniversary, and now it has reached a time when it may rightfully pause a moment to enjoy the present while looking back upon a glorious and golden past.

We may not spread on these pages an account of all our pleasant anniversary celebrations, but there are yet remaining those who can recall the very early ones. Those were not the days of grand banquets and evening dress in our good city of Reading; but, with our wives, and, shall I say, sweethearts, we gathered together in the Lodge room, listened to some good music and were favored with excellent addresses from the lips of distinguished Masons. Then, as a memento of the occasion, each lady was presented with a handsome box containing some of the best candy obtainable, and all went home with happy recollections of the event.

Times changed, and, with our silver anniversary of 1894, the members and their guests, were treated to a celebration surpassing any, up to that time, in this jurisdiction. The parquet of the Grand Opera House, on Penn below Fourth Street, was floored over, and upon the flooring were arranged double rows of tables, forming the arms of an immense Greek cross; in the centre of this cross, reaching from the floor to the chandelier, beneath which it stood, towered on high a magnificent pyramid of choice plants and sweet-scented flowers; the stage setting was a forest scene, the effect of which was heightened by other fine plants; this entire space was shut off from the parquet circle by a large number of expensive curtains, tastefully draped. With the snowy white table-cloths, and the twenty-five electric lights, symbolical of the occasion, sparkling like gems throughout the beautiful central pyramid, the whole scene was one long to be remembered.

The distinguished guest of the evening was His Excellency the Governor of Pennsylvania, Robert E. Pattison, who spoke on "Freemasonry and the Commonwealth," and was



HARRY D. SIDEL
1901



ALBERT G. BAUMAN
1904



*EDWIN W. DAVIS
1900



HARRY J. DUNN
1905



AARON D. EGOLF
1906

listened to with marked attention. Bro. Past D. D. G. M. Sydenham E. Ancona, taking as his subject "Charity," feelingly referred to the brotherly spirit existing between St. John's Lodge and her "Sister Lodges." Bro. P. M. Henry M. M. Richards, on the sentiment of "St. John's Lodge," rehearsed, most pleasantly, various points and incidents in its history, spoke of its marvelous success in the past, and hoped it might not fail in the years to come. This hope, we rejoice to say, has been, so far, fulfilled. The presence of Bro. Past Grand Master Richard Vaux was anticipated with great pleasure, as it was he who had granted the charter, and constituted the Lodge twenty-five years before; but, owing to his advanced age and increasing infirmity, he was prevented from attending the banquet and obliged to send his regrets, in which he referred to the "Silver Threads" of memory (the subject of his address), and the pleasant recollections of St. John's Lodge which they brought with them.

Bro. S. A. Baer, Ph. D., of Lodge No. 377, City Superintendent of Public Schools, being requested to do so, kindly and feelingly responded to the sentiment in his stead.

This most pleasant evening came to an end about 12.30 A.M., February 22, the dawn of "Washington's Birthday," who was not only the "Father of his Country," great in peace as well as in war, but who, nevertheless, did not disdain to be called a brother in Freemasonry with others of less renown.

Ten years ago was another notable event, when, on March 5, 1909, was celebrated the Fortieth Anniversary of the Lodge in the Banquet Hall of the Masonic Temple. Covers were laid for two hundred. The decorations were on an elaborate scale, with hundreds of small incandescent lights figuring in the illumination, having strings of beautiful colored leaves entwined about them and suspended from the ceiling.

With Bro. P. M. Oscar B. Wetherhold as Toastmaster, responses were made to the following sentiments:

“The Day we Celebrate,” Bro. Adam H. Schmehl, P. M.,
D. D. G. M.

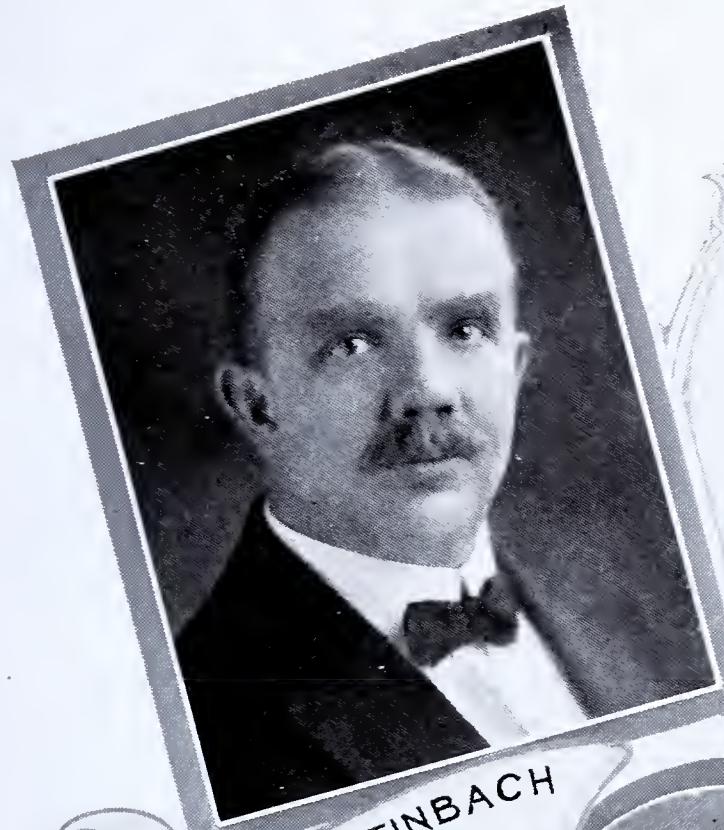
“435 Forty Years,” Bro. Edward H. Shearer P. M., P.
D. D. G. M., the only remaining charter member.

“Silver Threads in Masonry,” Bro. Henry M. M.
Richards, P. M.

Who does not recall the songs which were sung on that delightful evening, long to be remembered, not to mention the appetizing viands which made up the menu?

And now, once more, we gather, in joy and harmony, surrounded, it may be, by our unseen brethren who have entered into their final rest, all alike thankful for fifty years of great prosperity, through which we have been guided and guarded to the present “Golden Jubilee.”

May our Grand Master above, Who rules the universe, so watch over the welfare of St. John’s Lodge in the future, as He has in the past, that the reflection of its “Golden Anniversary” of today may lighten up its pathway along endless years to come.



PAUL K. LEINBACH
1908



GEORGE R. GREGORY
1909



HENRY M. FEGLEY
1907



WILLIAM H. LAUSCH
1910



MILTON W. YOCOM
1911

Golden Threads of Memory



UR GOLDEN JUBILEE, so long anticipated, has come and is gone. What a grand, happy and delightful gathering it was! Who can fail to look back upon it without having his breast filled with pride as he recalls the honorable and glorious past of St. John's Lodge, and remembers that he is not only a member of it but that he has also taken part in its achievements. And ignoble indeed must he be who departed to his home without firmly resolving that the banner, which has been raised so high during the fifty years just ended, should never be lowered to the dust if in his power to prevent.

With propitious weather, and nothing to mar its harmony, at 7.00 o'clock, on the evening of Friday, March 7, 1919, when the gavel of W. M. John Arthur Keppelman descended, after the regular exercises had taken place, and declared St. John's Lodge to be opened in due form, his eyes rested upon a great throng of men, all Masonically clad, that more than filled the vast auditorium in which they met, with a mere handful of the 399 members then on the rolls absent, of whom it may be truthfully said that, save those yet in military service, all of the remainder were either physically incapacitated or most unavoidably prevented from attending.

The joy of the occasion was further enhanced by the presence of representatives from amongst the officers of all sister lodges in the district, together with many District Deputy Grand Masters from other parts of our Commonwealth, all desirous of showing their brotherly affection for St. John's Lodge, congratulating it upon its past, and wishing it "God speed" for the future.

Especially worthy of mention was the fact that every one of the surviving Past Masters of the Lodge was present

save four, of whom, to the great regret of all, Bro. P. M. Edward H. Shearer, its only living Charter Member, because of age, was physically unfit to leave his home for such an occasion; another, Bro. P. M. Charles J. S. Behm, being still in service in France, and the remaining two most unwillingly prevented from attendance.

Bro. P. M. Frederick P. Heller, of Lodge No. 62, one of the honored guests, and the only person in the room who had been present at the constitution of the Lodge, was called upon and gave some pleasant reminiscences of that occasion. Bro. P. M. Edward H. Shearer shares with him the honor of being the sole survivors of that event.

A happy part of the business on the desk of the Secretary, Bro. Harry D. Sidel, was the reading of eleven applications for membership, an event which called to the remembrance of veteran brethren present many similar occurrences in the very early history of the Lodge.

While awaiting the arrival of the Grand Lodge Officers, the Worshipful Master was pleased to call upon Bro. P. M. Henry M. M. Richards for an historical resumé of the past fifty years, and also upon Bro. P. M. John E. Hill for some reminiscences of the past, both of which apparently much to the enjoyment of those present, Bro. Hill being No. 3 on the list of surviving past masters, and Bro. Richards No. 4.

The Right Worshipful Grand Master, accompanied by officers of the Grand Lodge, as follows, paid the Lodge an informal visitation and was received with customary honors:

Bro. James B. Krause, R. W. Grand Master.
" Samuel M. Goodyear, R. W. Junior Grand Warden.
" Thomas R. Patton, R. W. Grand Treasurer.
" John A. Perry, R. W. Grand Secretary.
" Frank B. Lynch, R. W. Grand Chaplain.
" Thaddeus G. Helm, D. D. G. M. First District.
" William H. Maxwell, D. D. G. M. Fortieth District.
" George F. Knight, Secretary to the Grand Master.

All were presented and introduced to the Worshipful Master and the members by Brother Jenkin Hill, D. D. G. M. of this district, who, with a reception committee composed



of Past Master Bro. Harry J. Dunn, Bros. Edwin A. Quier and Hon. George W. Wagner, escorted them to the hall.

Shortly after the arrival and reception of the foregoing Grand Officers and guests, the Lodge was delighted to welcome our distinguished Past Grand Master, Brother J. Henry Williams, who was also received with customary honors.

As an evidence of their high regard and esteem for W. M. Bro. John Arthur Keppelman, a handsome gavel, as a



memento of the occasion, was presented to him, through D. D. G. M. Bro. Jenkin Hill, from his brother officers of the Lodge.

Following this came a further evidence of the brotherly esteem in which St. John's Lodge is held by its sister lodges in the district, in the presentation, by W. M. Bro. Dr. Thomas H. A. Stites, of Lodge No. 406, F. & A. M., Hamburg, in a few appropriate remarks, of a beautiful set of officers' regalia. The officers of St. John's Lodge, having divested themselves of their regalia, the Worshipful Masters of each separate Lodge in turn invested an officer of St. John's Lodge, beginning with the Worshipful Master of the oldest Lodge and the Senior Warden of St. John's Lodge. The investiture of W. M. Bro. John Arthur Keppelman was made by the Grand Master in person with impressive and significant remarks.

With the closing of the Lodge in due form, the Stewards formed a procession of those present, in accordance with Masonic etiquette, and the brethren, over four hundred in

number, marched to the banquet room, for which purpose the large hall of the Temple was utilized. Here a scene of surpassing beauty met their eyes. Strains of music filled the hall, emanating from the orchestra seated on the stage, which was banked with ferns, potted plants and sweet-scented flowers. Overhanging the stage was the Masonic Emblem, and the words "St. John 435," and flanked on either side by the words "Fifty"—"Years," the whole surrounded by a blaze of light. Festooned across the room, its entire length, were beautiful vines, suspended from which and the ceiling were great numbers of electrically illuminated lanterns and globes shedding their golden light into every nook and corner of the hall. Draped and festooned around the walls were scores of our country's glorious "Stars and Stripes," while six long tables, covered with their snow-white cloths and attractive decorations, extended the length of the hall from the guest table which crossed it in front of the stage.

It is not necessary to dwell upon the details of this happy event in the history of St. John's Lodge, as they form a part of its printed souvenir.

W. M. Keppelman made an admirable presiding officer and toastmaster, and handled the whole event with exceptional ability and dignity. The only occurrence which tended, in any way, to mar the joy of the occasion was when it became his duty to announce the illness of His Excellency, Governor William C. Sproul, which prevented him from being present. The Governor was so greatly interested, however, in the event, that, with difficulty, he personally telephoned his regrets, which were taken down by a stenographer and read by W. M. Keppelman to the brethren, by whom the message was greatly appreciated.

Similar expressions of regret for unavoidable absence were received from the R. W. Senior Grand Warden, Bro. the Hon. Abraham M. Beitler, and from Grand Chaplain Bro. Bishop Ethelbert Talbot, as well as R. W. Past Grand Master Bro. Louis A. Watres, Esq.

The R. W. Grand Master delivered a most impressive



address, referring to the many distinguished members of the fraternity who had been instrumental in the elevation of mankind in general and the founding and upbuilding of our country in especial, and urging the brethren to ever uphold the principles enumerated by these great men, with particular reference to Bro. George Washington and his compatriots.

In a similar vein, and in a most interesting manner, addresses were made by the R. W. Past Grand Master Bro. the Hon. J. Henry Williams, Judge of the Superior Court of the Commonwealth; by the R. W. Junior Grand Warden Bro. Samuel M. Goodyear; by the Grand Chaplain, Bro. the Rev. Frank B. Lynch, and by the D. D. Grand Masters, Bro. Thaddeus G. Helm, of the First District, Lodge No. 43, and Bro. William H. Maxwell, of the Fortieth District, from Pottstown. Without exception, each and every address was of the most interesting character, and was listened to by the brethren with untiring attention. It is worthy of note to state that, in the course of one of these talks, the fact was made public that the membership of the Masonic fraternity in the United States now totals the significant figure of practically two million persons, comprising many of the most prominent men in its activities.

But the music and the singing. What shall be said of it, and how can we repeat in words its quality under the able leadership of Potentate George F. Eisenbrown of Rajah Temple? With more than four hundred male voices, many of them trained and capable, uniting in the rendition of the beautiful songs on the program, the effect was wonderful and it may be truly added that it was beautiful. He who is privileged to write these words will long remember how it inspired him, which, he is sure, was the experience of all present.

To everything there comes an end, even to life itself, so, after closing remarks by D. D. G. M. Bro. Jenkin Hill and the Worshipful Master himself, at 1.00 o'clock in the morning a happy body of brethren dispersed to their homes, admitting that they had been participants in the most pleasant

and notable event in the history of Masonry as pertaining to their jurisdiction, thankful for the favors which had been showered upon their beloved Lodge during the past fifty years by its ever-seeing and ever-watchful Grand Master above, and resolved to so live as to deserve a continuance of His fatherly care in the years of the future now extending into the unseen darkness ahead of them.



GOVERNOR WM. C. SPROUL

WILLIAMSPORT, PA., Mar. 13th, 1919.

JOHN A. KEPPELMAN, ESQ.,
W. M. St. John's Lodge, No. 435,
Reading, Penna.

My dear Master:

Have not had an opportunity to write you earlier to express my heartfelt appreciation of the splendid time shown me while on my recent visit to St. John's Lodge. The occasion was delightful and altogether in accordance with the dignity of the Fraternity.

The course traversed by your Lodge in the fifty years since its constitution, shows nothing at this time, as you look back, except the high places of worthy acts, and the Lodge can well be proud of its past record and look forward with inspiring hope to the tomorrow.

Please extend to all the brethren my fraternal greetings.

Sincerely and Fraternally yours,

JAMES B. KRAUSE,
Grand Master.

CONDENSED FINANCIAL STATEMENT
OF
St. John's Lodge, No. 435, F. & A. M.

For the Masonic Year ending December 27, 1918.

ASSETS

Securities held by the Trustees of
the General Fund:

Masonic Temple and Building Trust Stock	\$18,600.00
Less amount pledged as collateral security for loans made from the Trustees of the Relief Fund...	10,668.00

	\$ 7,932.00
Masonic Temple and Building Trust Second Mortgage Bonds	1,775.00

	\$ 9,707.00
Securities held by Trustees of the Relief Fund:	
Loan to the Trustees of the General Fund secured by stock of the Masonic Temple and Building Trust as collateral.....	\$10,668.00
Liberty Bonds	2,532.00
Bonds, mortgages and judgments.....	12,000.00

	25,200.00
Cash in treasury	1,091.65

Total	\$35,998.65

LIABILITIES—None.

